



IALA COUNCIL
4th session



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IALA HQ, France

10. Technical Activities

10.1 Committee work organisation

10.1.4 – Proposal for future work of IALA on MASS

Note by Japan, Singapore, Türkiye

1. INTRODUCTION

International discussions on Maritime Autonomous Surface Ship (MASS) are reaching an important phase, with the expected finalization of the non-mandatory MASS Code and the subsequent transition towards an experience building phase in the IMO in 2026.

In parallel, IALA has also conducted discussions on MASS through the MASS Task Force and its committees.

In this context, this document is submitted to invite the IALA Secretariat to ensure that IALA continues to address MASS in a timely and appropriate manner, taking into account various future developments related to MASS.

2. BACKGROUND

International Maritime Organization (IMO) has been discussing various issues necessary to align MASS with the existing regulatory framework for maritime traffic.

In parallel, IALA has also conducted discussions, through its committees and the MASS Task Force, on how Aids to Navigation (AtoN) and Vessel Traffic Service (VTS) should respond to MASS from their respective perspectives.

The Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) of the IMO, at its 110th session, continued the development of the non-mandatory MASS Code and agreed to the revised road map for this work. In particular, the Committee confirmed that the target for finalization and adoption of the non-mandatory MASS Code is MSC 111, to be held in May 2026.

In addition, MSC 110 considered the development of a framework for the experience-building phase (EBP) and confirmed, in the revised road map, that the EBP is planned to start after the adoption of the non-mandatory MASS Code at MSC 111.

As the non-mandatory MASS Code has progressed to adoption, discussions on MASS have reached a milestone, and attention is now shifting to a new phase, namely the EBP.

At the same time, the development of MASS-related technologies has progressed, and several countries have reached the demonstration stage with vessels employing such technologies (autonomous or remote operation). Cases of use in actual commercial operations are also being observed. In addition, it is expected that discussions regarding the introduction of MASS-related domestic legislation and research and development of related technologies will become even more active.

3. PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document is submitted to invite the IALA Secretariat, from an IALA perspective, to take note of the latest technological developments and the status of practical implementation related to MASS, to share discussions at IMO during the EBP, and based on these elements, to provide an overview on the appropriate timing for initiating discussions on MASS within IALA.

4. RELATED DOCUMENT

- IMO. MSC 110/21 Report of the Maritime Safety Committee on Its 110th Session
- IALA. The Future of Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS)
- IALA. Recommendation R1026 on Digitalization of Aids to Navigation and Services for Vessels of Varying Levels of Autonomy
- IALA. C03-19.1 Final Report of the 3rd Session of the IALA Council

5. DISCUSSION

At IALA, the work of the MASS Task Force was concluded in 2025, after which the Policy Advisory Panel (PAP) will lead efforts to develop an IALA MASS guideline, which is intended to provide guidance on how shore-based stakeholders should be involved in MASS.

Discussions on MASS at IMO to date have reached a milestone with the expected adoption of the non-mandatory code, and attention is now turning to a new phase, namely the EBP, towards the development of a mandatory code.

The development of MASS-related technologies, including autonomous and remote-controlled operations, has progressed to the stage of demonstration using actual vessels, and cases of use in commercial operations are also being observed. In addition, discussions regarding the introduction of MASS-related domestic legislation and research and development of related technologies are expected to become increasingly active.

In light of this situation, in order to respond to MASS in a timely and appropriate manner, it is considered necessary for IALA to have clarity on when and under what conditions discussions on MASS within IALA could be further advanced.

In this context, the IALA Secretariat is invited to consider the following points:

- a. To monitor, from an IALA perspective, the latest technological developments related to MASS and the status of practical implementation;
- b. To share, from an IALA perspective, discussions at IMO, including those related to the EBP; and



- c. Based on points a. and b., to provide an overview of discussions on MASS within IALA.

6. REQUESTS FOR THE COUNCIL AND THE SECRETARIAT

- **The Council** is invited to **consider** this document.
- **The Secretariat** is invited to **take action as** appropriate.